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SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT
FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 2008

In Today's Papers

Obama's Victory and the Challenges

Some media outlets continue to praise the inspiration Obama's victory has brought to the world. Mainstream Hurriyet carries the headline, "Love for Obamerica," and reports, "Obama has spread inspiration all over the world," as "the winds of change have spread from Africa to Australia and the question becomes: will there be an Aboriginal prime minister in Australia some day? A Turkish prime minister in Germany? Or even in Turkey, could a Kurd become president?" Islamist oriented Yeni Safak reports, "Obama's victory in America has started blowing the winds of courage for freedom throughout the world."

While others note the distinct challenges the President-elect faces.

Islamist-oriented Zaman reports, "The first news for Obama from Afghanistan is 'a civilian massacre,'" as "23 children and 10 women were killed by an American air strike in Afghanistan." Leftist-nationalist Cumhuriyet reports, "Russia took new steps yesterday against the U.S. missile shield." Zaman also reports, "PKK leaders Murat Karayilan and Zubeyir Aydar have joined the names of those who have sent letters of congratulations to the new U.S. President. " In their letter, published "on a web site that is close to the terrorist organization," the leaders "criticize the Bush administration for calling the PKK a terrorist organization," and "call for a solution to the Kurdish problem." Yasin Dogan of Islamist-oriented Yeni Safak writes, "Obama's new policies in Iraq will affect Turkey," for instance, "A U.S. withdrawal from Iraq could bring the Iraqi Kurds and Turkey closer together." Mainstream Milliyet reports President-elect Obama "Is Taking Over the Wreckage" of the American economy and the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Meanwhile, mainstream Sabah writes "CHP leader Baykal believes there would be a serious change in the moderate Islam policies of the US."

In a related story, liberal Radikal interprets Iranian President Ahmedinejad's congratulations to Obama on his victory as 'a rare praise,' noting it is the first time since Iran's 1979 Islamic revolution that such a message has been communicated.

Editorial opinion on President Elect Barack Obama

Murat Yetkin wrote in liberal-intellectual Radikal: "There is a serious risk of increased tension in troubled areas of the world until Barack Obama takes charge. Moreover, many of these troubled areas are in Turkey's neighborhood. The UN mandate in Iraq will expire and unless Iraqi parliament signs a security agreement with the United States before January, the US may leave. A new UNSC resolution on this matter would most probably face a Russian veto. The situation in Afghanistan is worsening with every passing day. Uncertainty in Pakistan is also an immediate problem. Turkey should think of ways to turn these risks into opportunities before January 20."

Muharrem Sarikaya wrote in mainstream Sabah: "The Italian Foreign Minister questioned 'Will Obama be a hope for Turkey's EU process or will he be a problem in resolving many regional issues, including the Armenian issue?' It's a good idea to look at previous Democrat administrations in the US to find the right answer to this question.

The most recent example is Clinton who, together with his party, played a significant role in Turkey's EU process and in resolving many regional issues. Despite all that support, Turkey's preference in the US has been the Republicans. With Obama's presidency, there will be different issues in Turkey-US relations. But these will not remain unresolved issues like a sword of Damocles forever hanging over Turkey. As has happened in the past, with a Democrat president, every problem will be resolved."

Sami Kohen wrote in mainstream Milliyet: "The global positive attitude to Obama's victory is a great opportunity not only for himself but for the US as well. If Obama fulfills all his promises,

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then the US will have a chance to improve its damaged image. There is one drawback: that people's expectations for Obama will be too high. How much of the current foreign policies could be changed by Obama? There is no doubt that Obama's stance and approach to foreign issues will be different, but will he be able to pursue completely different policies towards big individual problems like Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Russia? It is only natural for him to keep in mind the US' basic strategic and economic interests while shaping his foreign policies. Nevertheless, the world considers Obama as an opportunity for a peaceful world."

Turkey Will Host Caucasus Trilateral

Media outlets carry excerpts from visiting Azeri President Aliyev's address at the Turkish Parliament where he praised Turkey's mediation efforts in the region, including President Gul's recent rapprochement with Armenia. Aliyev also emphasized the Nagorno Karabakh issue by calling it "the most important challenge to stability in the region," yet expressed some hope that Turkey's regional efforts may be a positive contribution. "Our hopes have increased because of Turkey's recent efforts in the region. We will watch new political steps" Aliyev said.

Zaman front page feature reads: "Gul Will Bring Armenian and Azeri President Together in Istanbul." In connection with the Aliyev reports, Islamist oriented Zaman and mass appeal Aksam add that Turkey is preparing to host a trilateral summit between Azerbaijan and Armenia. Armenian President Sargsyan was asked to comment during his Brussels trip, and President Sargsyan said "I will be happy to meet with President Aliyev on any occasion." The Zaman report also quoted Azeri Foreign Minister Mammadyarov as saying a Turkey-hosted trilateral summit would not focus only on the Nagorno Karabakh issue, but would also cover other issues of mutual concern.

According to Zaman, Ankara's initiative to host a trilateral is a deliberate step to prevent potential escalation of the Armenian genocide controversy in the US presidential election aftermath.

Court Rejects Objections to Release Rape Suspect Islamist Journalist Uzmez

Milliyet, Cumhuriyet, Posta, Radikal, Vatan and others: Bursa 5th Heavy Penal Court rejected the objections to the release of Hussein Uzmez yesterday. Uzmez had been released from jail, pending trial for sexually abusing a 14 year old girl, after a medical report of the Council of Forensic Medicine claimed that the victim was not harmed physically or emotionally.

TV News (CNN Turk)

Domestic

- Justice Minister Sahin said the AKP had no concerns about the investigation initiated by the Yargitay Chief Prosecutor in connection with links to the Deniz Feneri charity fraud case.
- The Court completed reading 1794 pages of the Ergenekon indictment
- A police officer facing trial for the death of Feyzullah Ete in a park in Istanbul, has been released. Ete died after he was kicked on the chest by the police officer
- DTP Viransehir-Sanliurfa provincial chair Emrullah Cin is given an 18-month prison sentence for spreading PKK propaganda
- The Kirkuk-Yumurtalik pipeline carrying oil from Iraq to Turkey was damaged by an explosion in the Sanliurfa region. The blast halted supplies and caused a large spill in the area, potentially endangering the nearby Ataturk dam. The Sanliurfa Governor said the cause of the blast was a technical problem.

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World

- President-elect Barack Obama offers the White House chief of staff position to Rep. Rahm Emanuel
 - The Romanian Defense Minister said the country's 501 peacekeepers in Iraq will all leave by the end of the year
 - EU Commissioner Olli Rehn said Turkey's membership is important for Europe
 - A Russian newspaper claimed that Vladimir Putin will return as the president next year
 - Israeli FM Livni criticized Obama for announcing his willingness to talk with Iran regarding its nuclear program
- WILSON